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## THE CUBA OF THE FAR EAST.

BY THE HON. JOHN BARRETT, UNITED STATES MINISTER TO SIAM.

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CUBA has a remarkable counterpart in the Asian-Pacific. The Philippine Islands, now the scene of rebellion, bear a striking resemblance to that home of revolution in the Atlantic. Both are Spanish possessions. Cuba is the richest island in the West Indies; the Philippines are the most resourceful of the East Indies. They lie respectively to the southeast of the continents of North America and Asia, with which they maintain close commercial relations. Both are located in the tropical zone and both have like products. After the famous Manila hemp, the greatest wealth of the Philippines is in sugar, as is that of Cuba. While Cuban tobacco in the shape of fragrant Hayanas rules the market of the new world, the Manila cigars supply the demand of the old world. The United States buys the major portion of Cuba's exports and a goodly portion of those of the Philippines. Both possess inexhaustible and varied resources, which at present are only partially developed.

Cuba in her proximity to the United States will always be closely studied in America, but the Philippines are deserving of more attention than they now receive. The lack of general knowledge in America regarding this Asiatic group is to be regretted when we consider that, according to the best authorities, it forms the richest archipelago in the world. Were a person skeptical concerning this assertion, a visit to its ports and inland territory, and a cruise through the labyrinth of large and small islands, would remove all doubts. No less than 1,900 islands constitute this wonderful dependency of Spain.

A few figures will assist in giving an accurate idea of the Philippines. The area of the entire group nearly equals that of California or Japan, being variously estimated from 120,000 to

160,000 square miles. The principal island, Luzon, is approximately equal in area to Illinois, or about 56,000 square miles. The total population is slightly in excess of that of New York State, and now numbers 7,000,000. In this connection it can be noted that Luzon alone exceeds Cuba in area by 14,000 square miles, and has over double the population. The second largest island is Mindanao. This is to the south, and occupies nearly the same area as West Virginia, or 24,000 square miles.

The Philippines hold a prominent position on the map of the Far East. Even a glance attests this contention. Manila, the capital, is easy of access from Hong Kong. Three days' steaming by a regular line of cargo carriers over a 600 miles route brings one to the home of tobacco and typhoons. Communication with Singapore is intermittent and usually by the way of Saranak and British North Borneo, over a 1,400 miles course. If the traveler does not meet a typhoon, which was my unlucky experience, he will find the sea trip to Manila agreeable. But it must be remembered—and will be well remembered if one is in the least squeamish or unnerved by tempestuous seas—that the Philippines are the birthplace, cradle, and nursery of typhoons of every description. Nor is that all. Nature in showering riches unnumbered upon Luzon did not forget to provide her with an ever-ready supply of earthquakes which are brought out to startle newcomers with suddenness and frequency. Japan is free from earthquakes compared to the Philippines. A man may be conscious of a slight motion in Yokohama, but in Manila his very bones seem to rattle. In Japan you are gently swayed; in Luzon you are racked. San Francisco, which enjoys a slight tremor now and then, would think that her foundations were of dynamite if she experienced one of the dozen shocks Manila has known in the last three decades. Indeed, the study of earthquakes past and present is a worthy excuse for visiting the Philippines. No less an authority than Sir John Bowring says, in describing these seismic effects: "They have overturned mountains; they have filled up valleys, they have desolated extensive plains; they have opened passages from the sea into the interior, and from the lake into the sea."

Are they not, then, a fit land for rebellion and insurrection? The spirits of air and earth alike nurture unrest. As I see again, as it were, those cavernous cracks in cathedrals and walls, those

tottering spires and towers, those mountains where Pelion has veritably been piled on Ossa, insurrection seems the logical result of the surroundings and associations.

Romance is closely woven in the annals of the Philippines. Hither came the Spanish galleon, that craft whose name alone suggests adventure. From here it sailed away sunk to the gun-wales with golden profits and tribute. Those were the times when the mariner sailed from Spain a pauper and returned a prince, when the kings and queens of Europe dismissed their jesters and sat enthralled by the stories of inexhaustible riches which were told.

It was the great Magellan that discovered the Philippines in 1520, and raised there the colors of King Charles I. of Spain. They were the scene of his triumph and of his death. Wounded while fighting with the natives in the island of Zebu, he never lived to receive the blessings and honors of the King who had despatched him on his historic sail around the world.

An inexhaustible source of enrichment to Spain, this colony has never been a source of comfort except during short periods of its history. In the early days the Chinese, who had traded with the islands for unknown ages, were loath to give way to the Spaniards, and strove to exterminate the invaders. Legaspi, the founder of Manila, placated them for the time being, but later they swept down from the north with vast piratical fleets, manned by tens of thousands, unheralded and unexpected, only to return when they had harassed the strangers to their satisfaction, and nearly expelled them from the islands. Dr. Von Moeilendorff, the German Consul at Manila, has in his possession a Chinese publication written in the 13th century, which graphically describes the land, people, principal places and resources of the islands, and shows the customs and habits of the natives to have been much the same then as now.

The Dutch, too, were envious of Spain's conquest, and on one occasion a desperate naval battle was fought to defend Manila from their attack. When England and Spain were at war in the middle of the last century Manila was captured by the British and occupied for two years. Spain promised a ransom of \$5,000,000, and the city was evacuated, but through the conditions prevailing in both Europe and the Orient England did not exact payment. The enthusiastic British advocate of colonial

expansion now looks at this land of incalculable wealth and berates the statesmen of those days for surrendering such a prize. If the bystander desires to further irritate him he will indulge in mild references to the time when Java also was a British possession.

Were I asked to name the chief characteristic of the Philippine Islands—after earthquakes and typhoons—I would at once suggest the power and hold of the ecclesiastics. This makes the first and last impression on the visitor; it is before him wherever he travels; it visibly predominates in the government and even extends into commerce; it is an all-controlling influence in the Philippine group. If at first one is prejudiced against it the feeling in a measure vanishes and even turns into admiration.

The church and state are practically one, though nominally not identical. If there is evil in this ecclesiastic sway it is assuredly more than counterbalanced by the good it accomplishes for the natives or common people. The majority appear happy and content. The restless, uneasy class, among whom the present insurrection has its followers, are the half-castes (*Mestizos*), descended from Chinese fathers and native mothers, who represent a small proportion of the entire population, though strong enough to organize a rebellion. They care little for either church or state.

A marked result of the influence of the church is that the inhabitants of the Philippines are Christian—a condition which stands out in decided contrast to that of other lands of Asia. From one end of Luzon to the other, few, if any, Pagan temples can be seen lifting their pagodas and pinnacles to the sky.

It is a mistake to suppose that the Philippines are the home of barbaric, uncivilized tribes. Manila was the seat of colleges, observatories, and technical schools before Chicago was founded; roads to all points of the compass had been constructed by the friars in Luzon before there was a paved street in the vicinity of the site of Franklin Square in New York City; and devoted padres had carried the gospel to the heart of the tropical jungle before the Pilgrim Fathers landed at Plymouth Rock.

Except in wild portions of the interior and in distant unexploited islands a considerable proportion of the inhabitants can read and write. Spanish is the language of the more advanced

classes, while a "pidgin" Spanish is spoken by the uneducated. There is no one native tongue, but a variety of dialects, of which the principal are the Tagalese and Visayan. The schools are exclusively in the hands of the church, and appear to be well conducted. In Manila are colleges with advanced curriculums and modern facilities. Of the several millions of people in Luzon, not over half a million are beyond the absolute control of the priests, whose efforts to preserve order are so respected that lawlessness is seldom displayed within the sphere of their influence. Numbering nearly 3,000, they include many men of great ability, noble character, and wide knowledge; the majority are faithful to their vows, and the few who backslide are usually of mixed blood, or natives.

The ecclesiastics of the Philippines represent the leading orders. The Augustinians, who were the pioneers, were closely followed by the Franciscans, after whom in turn came the Dominican Fathers, the Religious Devotees, the Society of Jesus and the Capuchins. With headquarters in Manila, they have divided up in some remarkable but satisfactory way the provinces and villages, so that their work goes on with little friction. They, at least, have demonstrated that missionary work can succeed among Asiatics.

Looking more closely at the natives, we find them gentle, polite, and hospitable. They are not ambitious beyond owning a little home and having sufficient rice for the family. Thirty-five dollars will provide a man with abundant food and clothing for a year. Although inclined to be lazy, as are all tropical people, they are exceedingly fond of amusements. Every village has its band, and on the slightest provocation the band will play and the dancers gather. Let some one cry out, however, that a cock-fight is to take place, and the music and dancing will stop as suddenly as they began. The women, more than the men, are the supporters of the family, and, as in Siam and the Malay States, they do most of the marketing and petty trading. Still more to their credit, be it recorded that they have strict regard for family ties.

Cock-fighting might be called the national sport, as bull-fighting is in Madrid. Not a town is without a cock-pit. In Manila thousands witness the contests. The noise and excitement exceed the confusion of an American baseball game when

the home team scores a winning run in the last inning. The right to have, or rent, cock-pits is sold to the highest bidder and the state revenue from this source amounts to several hundred thousand dollars a year.

The government of the Philippines reposes in a Governor-General, who is appointed by the Sovereign of Spain. He resides in Manila and is assisted by a Council of State. The islands, with separate governors, are divided into provinces, which are subdivided into districts, communes, and parishes, with appropriate officials. There is also a Council of State for the Philippines, which sits in Madrid and advises the Minister of Colonies. The present Governor-General is Blanco y Erenas, a man of considerable experience and high standing in Spanish official circles. The regular military force does not much exceed 10,000 men, of which number about one-third are native infantry. Now that a rebellion has broken out, the number of troops is being augmented by every steamer that arrives. A fleet of small gunboats and two or three cruisers make Manila their headquarters, but it is plain that the city is not protected with reference to defence against a foreign power. It could be easily razed to the ground by a half dozen modern gunboats—but that is true of most of our American seaports. The state, army and navy officials one meets in Manila are an agreeable set of men, particularly the latter. The police force of the Philippines is worthy of special mention. It is better than would be expected. The rank and file is composed of natives, but the officers belong to the army. Strict discipline is maintained and few complaints are registered on account of neglect of duty.

In material wealth the Philippines are lavishly blessed. Hemp, sugar, and tobacco are three products that bring enormous profits, and coffee bids fair to soon rival them. In 1894 the hemp marketed was valued in gold at \$7,693,860; sugar, \$5,816,848; tobacco, \$1,674,094. The total foreign trade this year will probably exceed \$35,600,000. There is a heavy tax on imports, which, with other customs' dues, direct taxes, monopolies, and lotteries, bring in an annual revenue of \$8,000,000, or about one-fourth of the valuation of the foreign commerce.

The prodigality of nature impresses the traveller wherever he journeys. In the forest he sees ebony, logwood, iron wood, sapan wood, gum trees, and cedar; between the forests and the gardens

the fruiting trees, orange, mango, tamarind, guava, and cocoanut; in the cultivated area, sugar cane, tobacco, rice, hemp, coffee, cotton, bananas, vanilla, cassia, ginger, pepper, indigo, cocoa, pine apples, wheat, and corn. The minerals include gold, copper, iron, coal, quicksilver, sulphur, and saltpetre. From the sea, mother of pearl, coral, tortoise shell, and amber are derived. And these are by no means the only resources—they are nothing more than a casual list noted down as each plant or product came under my observation. The animal kingdom keeps pace with the vegetable and mineral. To say nothing of the water buffalo, the most useful beast in the tropics, goats, sheep, swine, and the tough little ponies, which take part in the domestic life of the people, the jungle swarms with fauna of such variety that the naturalist finds here a paradise. Snakes and lizards, spiders and ants, tarantulas and crocodiles abound. Apparently strange to relate, there are few beasts of prey, if any, worthy of note—but this is not strange when it is remembered that the Philippines are islands far distant from the main land. The flora of the country is no less rich than the fauna.

The physical conformation of Luzon is conducive to extensive cultivation and large population. The high mountain range in the interior gradually lowers toward the sea, making beautiful valleys, rolling hills, upland and lowland, forest and field, drained with numerous rivers and dotted here and there with lakes. The coast line is irregular, and bays and bayous extend far inland.

Before saying good-bye to the Philippines we must take a final glance at Manila—one of the great cities of the Far East, concerning which the world at large knows so little. With a population of 300,000, it is growing more rapidly than many of our own cities. It is a combination of the ancient and the modern. The first impression is that of a mediæval town, but a closer inspection discloses railroads, street cars, telephones, electric light, boulevards, parks, clubs, suburbs, and all the advantages—and vices—of the nineteenth century. Manila rests on low ground, and with few high buildings does not make a remarkable skyline as seen from the steamer entering port. Massive new docks and jetties in course of construction show the modern commercial spirit of the town, while back of these the walled city, with battlements and fortresses, reminds one of the eventful



past. The steamer anchors half a mile from the mouth of the narrow River Pasig, which flows from east to west through the heart of the city. This stream is alive with small craft, and is crossed by handsome bridges. On the south side is the old walled Manila proper; on the north, the newer and business portion. Further up the river, to the east, are handsome homes of merchants. The English and German community, numbering 300 or more, support excellent clubs in addition to those maintained by the European Spaniards, of whom there are, approximately, 5,000. The social side of life is also kept up by theatres, musical societies, and lawn tennis, golf, gun, cycling, and jockey clubs. Trade and shipping are guarded by a chamber of commerce; charity and benevolence are represented in hospitals, homes and asylums; education by colleges and schools of law, theology, medicine, pharmacy, and manual training; fine arts and science by museums, rare collections, and observatories; manufacturing by immense cigar, cigarette and rope factories, and religion by cathedrals, monasteries, nunneries, and convents without limit.

The present insurrection first gave signs of life in the early summer of this year and troubles began in August. The capture of Manila was set for September 18, but was frustrated by the discovery of the plot on August 30. There is no such organization, strength, leadership, and equipment among the insurgents as in Cuba, and it would appear to be only a question of a few months before the flame of revolution is reduced to a spark.

JOHN BARRETT.